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ABSTRACT

Data from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF:99) show that fewer than one-third of all faculty members were tenured in 1998-1999. Some observers anticipate a trend toward a two-tiered system with a shrinking number of tenured faculty members in one group and a mix of part-time and nontenured full-time faculty members in the other. Analysis of findings from the NSOPF:99 shows that increasing use of part-time faculty, most of whom do not have tenure, is undercutting the tenure system. The evidence for an increasing number of nontenured full-time faculty members is more equivocal. Research also suggests that more faculty members are teaching in institutions that do not offer tenure. Evidence also suggests that faculty members who are not on track for tenure received lower salaries than those on track for tenure. This differential suggests that institutions may use contract or other nontenure track faculty members as lower cost teaching labor. Evidence does not support the charge that tenured faculty members coast on their past achievement, since tenured faculty published more and served on more committees than faculty members without tenure or not on a tenure track. For the most part, the share of women and minority teachers with tenure has increased, closing the gap to some extent. This improvement may represent the efforts to diversify the higher education workforce over the last decade. (Contains 11 figures.) (SLD)



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Update

Tenure

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Tenure

INTRODUCTION

Tenure continues to be a contentious issue in higher education. Some observers anticipate a trend toward a two-tiered system with a shrinking number of tenured faculty members in one group and an amalgam of part-time and non-tenured full-time faculty members in the other. This report supports at least part of this proposition in finding that the increasing use of part-time faculty members, most of whom are not tenured, is undercutting the tenure system. The evidence for an increasing number of non-tenured full-time faculty members is more equivocal. The results also suggest that more faculty members are teaching in institutions that do not offer tenure.

ALL FACULTY MEMBERS

Less than one-third of all faculty members were tenured in 1998-99 according to the data collected from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF:99) sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics

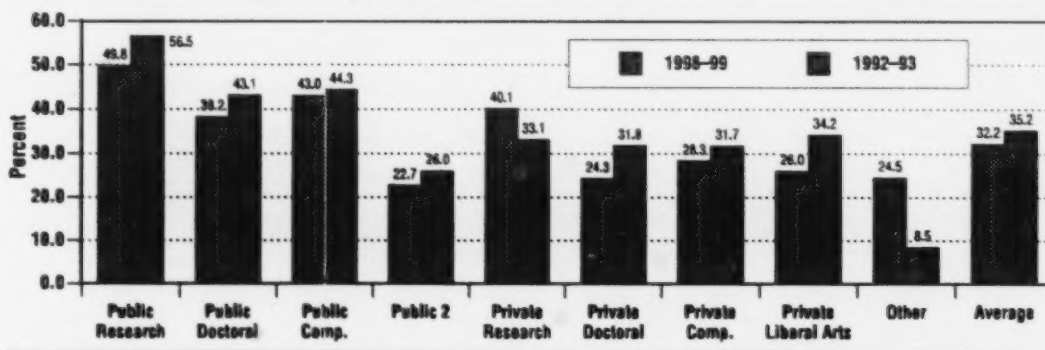
(NCES) in the U.S. Department of Education. These statistics are based on sample data, so small changes between the two years may be due to sampling error. In this report, faculty members are defined as those whose major responsibility is teaching, some or all of whose instructional duties are for credit, and who have faculty status

The share of faculty members who are tenured has declined from 35 percent to 32 percent in the six years since the last study in 1992-93. Three factors may account for this downward trend. The first is a change in the share of faculty members on tenure track and the second is the increase in the number of faculty members who say they work in institutions that do not offer tenure. The third is the increasing share of the faculty that teaches part-time. In 1992-93, 40 percent of the faculty was classified as part-time and in 1998-99, the share had risen to 45 percent. In general, part-time faculty members were less likely to have tenure than full-time faculty members.

Figure 1 includes all faculty members and shows the change

Figure 1

Percent of All Faculty Members with Tenure, 1992-93 and 1998-99



in the percent of faculty members with tenure by institutional type. The results show an

overall decline in the share of faculty members that have tenure. The drop is sharpest in

private liberal arts colleges, private doctoral universities, and public research universities.

Figure 2

Percent of all Faculty Members not on Tenure Track, 1992-93, 1998-99

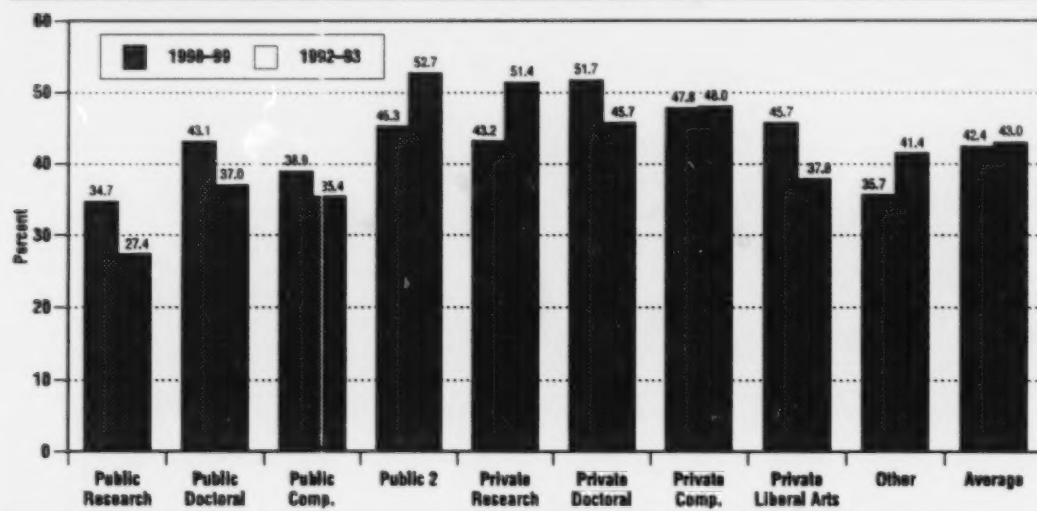


Figure 3

Percent of all Faculty Members Working at Institutions Without Tenure, 1992-93, 1998-99

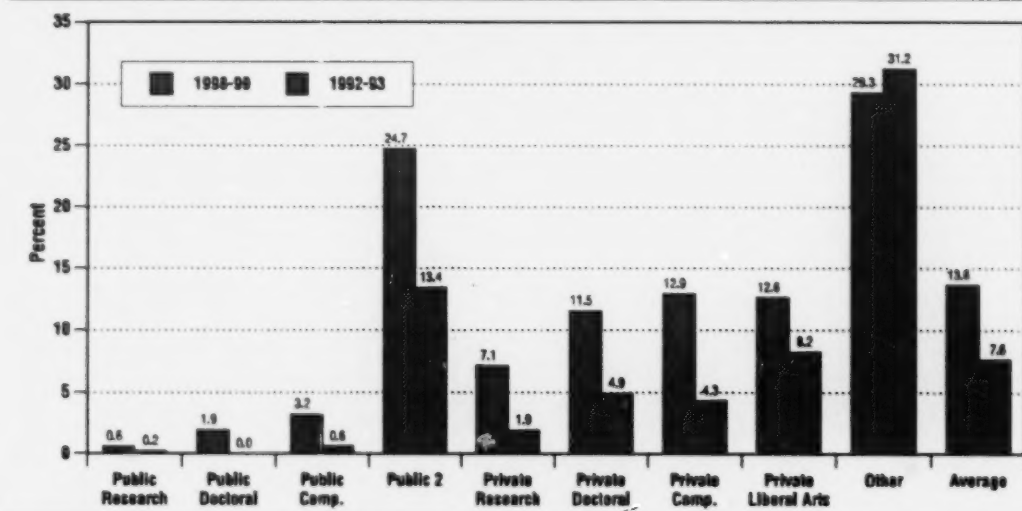
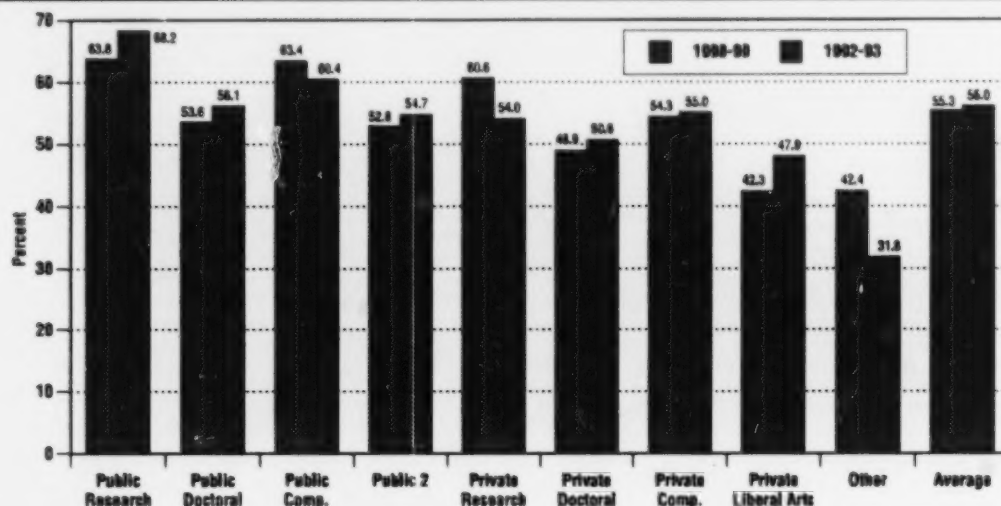


Figure 4

Percent of Full-Time Faculty Members with Tenure, 1992-93 and 1998-99



The first reason that might explain this decline is the share of faculty members not on tenure track. Even though the overall trend in the share of faculty members who are not on tenure track is relatively unchanged, the results differ among types of institutions. Increases in the share of faculty not on track for tenure are noted for some types of institutions, with declines in others. The biggest increase in non-tenure track faculty is seen in public research universities, private liberal arts colleges, private doctoral universities, and public doctoral universities (Figure 2).

The institutional movement away from having tenure is apparent in nearly all sectors.

(Figure 3) Traditionally, those teaching in "Other" institutions were most likely not to have tenure as an option. This group represents a mixed bag of institutions, many of which are specialized, religious, or have small enrollments. Compared with those in other sectors, (excluding "other") faculty members in community colleges were more likely to be teaching in institutions without tenure, up 11 percentage points since 1992-93.

The results suggest that community college faculty members are the least likely to have tenure. One-quarter of the community college faculty members indicate that they teach at an institution without tenure, which is larger than the 23 percent who have tenure.

FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS

Figure 4 shows the percent of full-time faculty members that were tenured in 1998-99. The results confirm that the share of full-time faculty members with tenure did not change appreciably. Five of the institutional sectors show a slight decline in the share of faculty with tenure and three sectors show an increase. Between 55 and 56 percent of the full-time faculty members had tenure, which was not a significant difference between 1992-93 and 1998-99.

WORKLOAD

The most consistent criticism against tenure is that it protects faculty members who are no

Table 1

Indicators of Workload for Full-Time Faculty Members With and Without Tenure, 1998-99*

	TENURED	ON TRACK	NOT ON TRACK
Public Research Universities			
Career publication	62.4	17.0	16.1
Recent publication ¹	14.2	7.9	5.3
Number of committees	5.5	3.8	1.1
Graduate committees	4.6	3.1	0.9
Undergraduate committees	0.8	0.7	0.2
Number of classes	2.5	2.5	3.1
Weekly scheduled office hrs.	5.4	4.4	6.2
Administrative committees	3.9	3.1	2.5
Private Research Universities			
Career publication	66.0	22.8	14.8
Recent publication	14.7	8.7	5.8
Number of committees	4.4	3.7	1.2
Graduate committees	3.6	2.7	1.0
Undergraduate committees	0.8	1.0	0.2
Number of classes	2.2	2.2	2.5
Weekly scheduled office hrs.	4.9	4.7	4.2
Administrative committees	4.1	3.0	2.2
Public Doctoral			
Career publication	51.7	20.6	10.0
Recent publication	12.5	8.6	3.3
Number of committees	4.0	2.8	1.6
Graduate committees	3.5	2.3	0.9
Undergraduate committees	0.6	0.5	0.7
Number of classes	2.8	2.8	3.2
Weekly scheduled office hrs.	5.6	5.2	6.0
Administrative committees	4.2	3.3	2.2
Private Doctoral			
Career publication	43.5	16.2	16.7
Recent publication	10.7	4.9	5.9
Number of committees	3.2	2.7	1.4
Graduate committees	2.7	2.1	1.1
Undergraduate committees	0.5	0.6	0.4
Number of classes	2.8	2.8	2.8
Weekly scheduled office hrs.	5.3	5.1	6.7
Administrative committees	3.6	3.0	2.5
Public Comprehensive			
Career publication	25.0	12.6	7.2
Recent publication	6.9	6.0	2.8
Number of committees	2.8	2.3	1.1
Graduate committees	2.1	1.4	0.7
Undergraduate committees	0.7	0.9	0.4
Number of classes	3.4	3.4	3.6
Weekly scheduled office hrs.	6.4	6.4	6.4
Administrative committees	3.8	3.4	2.6
Private Comprehensive			
Career publication	24.5	11.7	9.1
Recent publication	7.3	5.1	4.8
Number of committees	2.3	1.9	1.3
Graduate committees	1.3	1.0	0.8
Undergraduate committees	1.0	0.9	0.5
Number of classes	3.2	3.5	3.6
Weekly scheduled office hrs.	6.1	6.7	6.9
Administrative committees	3.2	3.0	2.8
Private Liberal Arts			
Career publication	21.7	7.4	7.8
Recent publication	6.5	3.8	2.8
Number of committees	1.6	1.5	1.1
Graduate committees	0.4	0.6	0.4
Undergraduate committees	1.2	1.0	0.7
Number of classes	3.4	3.6	3.3
Weekly scheduled office hrs.	6.4	7.1	7.2
Administrative committees	3.8	2.9	2.6
Public Two-Year			
Career publication	9.3	10.7	3.2
Recent publication	2.7	3.6	1.2
Number of committees	0.9	0.5	0.4
Graduate committees	0.3	0.2	0.1
Undergraduate committees	0.6	0.3	0.3
Number of classes	4.2	4.2	3.9
Weekly scheduled office hrs.	7.1	7.0	8.7
Administrative committees	3.1	2.9	2.1

Table 2

Average Salaries of Faculty Members by Tenure Status and Institutional Type, 1998-99

	TENURED	ON TRACK	NOT ON TRACK
Public Research	\$69,123	\$49,240	\$42,982
Public Doctoral	\$66,331	\$45,863	\$42,452
Public Comprehensive	\$54,684	\$43,976	\$34,026
Public Two-Year	\$50,272	\$37,611	\$34,220
Private Research	\$86,552	\$50,540	\$54,837
Private Doctoral	\$68,544	\$50,246	\$50,244
Private Comprehensive	\$59,004	\$41,654	\$38,810
Private Liberal Arts	\$52,831	\$39,284	\$35,709
Other	\$53,030	\$43,215	\$40,844
Average	\$59,817	\$43,595	\$40,408

*The numbers reported are average number the faculty members produce or participate in.

¹Recent is defined as within the past two years.

longer productive and engaged in their academic pursuits. The following tables provide persuasive evidence that tenured faculty members are more prolific researchers and publishers and more engaged in the life of the institution than are those without tenure. Table 1 is limited to full-time faculty sorted by institutional type. The table lists several work measures and compares faculty members with tenure, those on tenure track and those who were not on tenure track in 1998-99.

The results suggest that in most types of institutions, tenured faculty members were more likely to have published within the last

two years and served on more committees than were those without tenure. The number of classes taught and the number of office hours held weekly were the only work measures in which tenured faculty members did not consistently equal or exceed the levels of faculty members without tenure.

COMPENSATION

As expected, full-time tenured faculty members earn more than those without tenure. The most compelling point to be made about tenured faculty members is the huge gap between what tenured professors earned at public research insti-

tutions compared to tenured professors at private research universities in 1998-99. The difference is over \$17,000 a year. The gap is not so extreme for those faculty members on track for tenure, but the difference is over \$11,000 for those faculty members that are not on track in the two institutions.

Full-time faculty members not on track for tenure are consistently paid less than those on track for tenure in public institutions. Only two types of private institutions are exceptions to the rule. In private research universities faculty members who are not on track for tenure earn more than those who are

Figure 5

Percent of Male and Female Full-Time Faculty Members with Tenure, 1998-99 and 1992-93

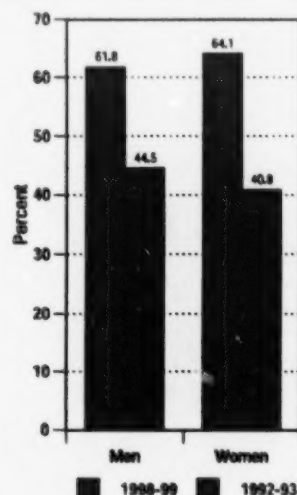


Figure 6

Percent of Male and Female Full-Time Faculty Members on Tenure Track, 1998-99 and 1992-93

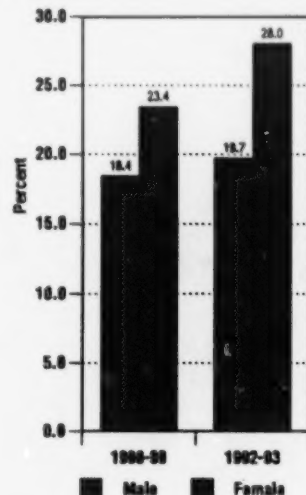
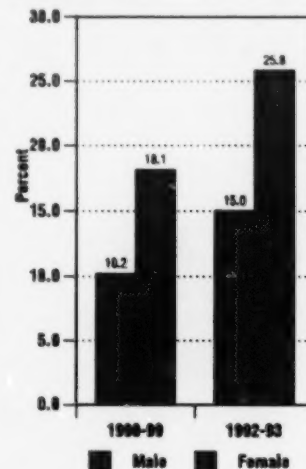


Figure 7

Percent of Male and Female Full-Time Faculty Members Teaching in Institutions that Do Not Offer Tenure, 1998-99 and 1992-93



on track and essentially no difference exists between the two groups in private doctoral universities. The salary advantage of tenure track faculty members over those not on track for tenure reasserts itself in the remaining sectors.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FACULTY MEMBERS

In 1992-93, 64 percent of the men had tenure compared with 41 percent of the women. In 1998-99, 62 percent of the men had tenure, but 45 percent of the women had tenure. This change suggests that the increasing number of women who were hired earlier in the decade have accumulated enough years on the job to become eligible for tenure.

The share of both male and female faculty on track for tenure has dropped, but women have declined more than men. This may be because recently hired women are more likely than men to teach in community colleges, which have the lowest tenure rate among all types of institutions.

The share of men and women that are not on tenure track has declined over the time period. Women are still less likely to be on tenure track than men, but the difference has narrowed.

A larger share of white faculty members were tenured in 1998-99 compared with minority

Figure 8

Percent of Full-Time Faculty Members with Tenure by Racial/Ethnic Group, 1998-99 and 1992-93

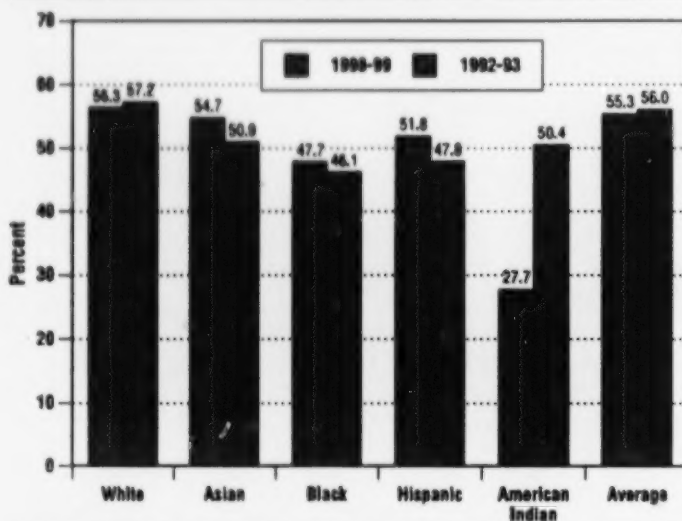


Figure 9

Percent of Full-Time Faculty Members on Tenure Track by Racial/Ethnic Group, 1998-99 and 1992-93

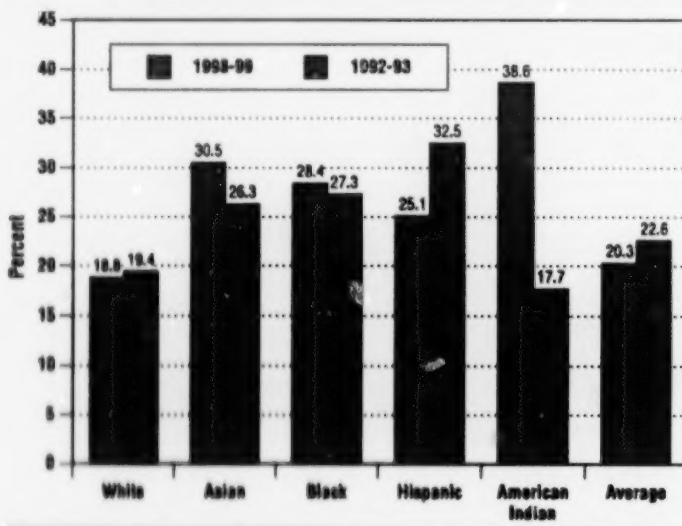


Figure 10

Percent of Full-Time Faculty Members Not on Tenure Track by Racial/Ethnic Group, 1998-99 and 1992-93

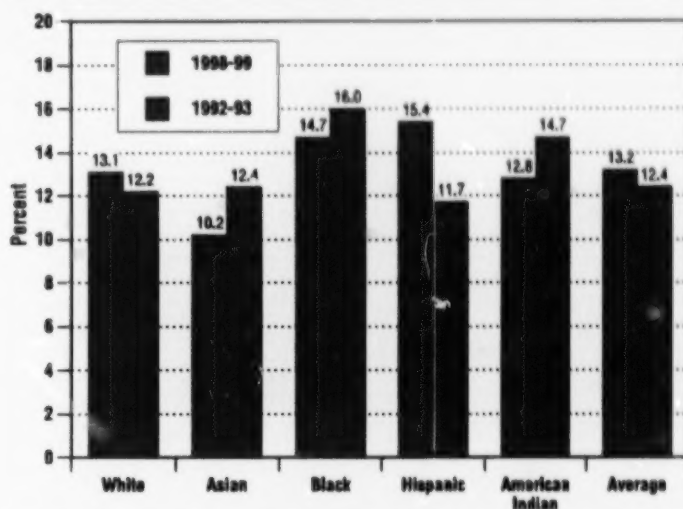
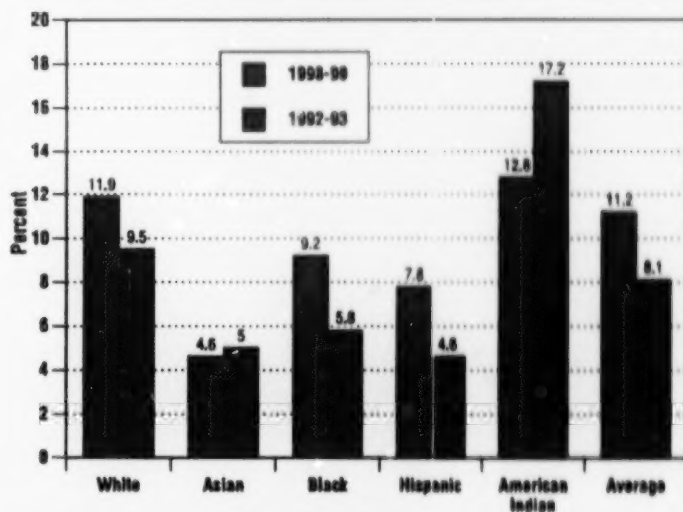


Figure 11

Percent of all Faculty Members in Institutions That do not Offer Tenure by Race/Ethnic Group, 1992-93, 1998-99



faculty members, but the share of minority faculty members with tenure increased more rapidly since 1992-93 than was the case for white faculty members. The exception to this is American Indians, but the group comprises such a small share of the faculty, that sampling error accounts for some of this difference.

About 20 percent of the faculty members were on tenure track in 1998-99, which is slightly lower than 1992-93. The share of white faculty members on tenure track has not changed much over the time period, but the share of Asian, Black, and American Indian faculty members on tenure track has crept up, with only Hispanic faculty showing a decline. Concern that newly hired minority faculty members are being left out of the tenure process is not supported by the results.

The share of full-time faculty members not on track for tenure has increased, but not significantly. In general minority faculty members were less likely to be working without hope of tenure than was the case for white faculty members. The one exception to this is Hispanic faculty members that showed greater likelihood of being excluded from tenure in 1998-99 than was the case in 1992-93. Again, the results do not support the contention that newly hired minority faculty members are being shunted into teaching jobs with no hope of tenure.

Strip in Logo

Overall, there has been an increase in the share of full-time faculty members teaching in institutions that do not offer tenure. The black and Hispanic faculty members were more likely to teach in institutions that did not offer tenure in 1998-99 than they were in 1992-93. Asian faculty members did not change appreciably on this measure and American Indian faculty members were less likely to teach in institutions that did not offer tenure.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The tenure story is mixed. The increase in the use of part-time faculty members, most of whom do not have tenure, seems to have reduced the overall share of faculty members with tenure slightly. Limiting the population to those

teaching full-time shows almost no change in the percent of the faculty tenured nor any appreciable change in those teaching without tenure and a solid continuation of the share of faculty members working their way toward tenure. The other trend to watch is the increase in the share of faculty members teaching in institutions that do not offer tenure.

The evidence suggests that in public colleges and universities, faculty members who are not on track for tenure received lower salaries than those on track for tenure. This differential, along with the fact that full-time faculty members not on tenure track teach more classes, suggests that public institutions may use contract or other non-tenure track faculty members as lower cost teaching labor. At the same time, these non-tenure

track faculty members spend less time on academic committees and publishing than their tenure-track peers.

The charge that tenured faculty members coast on their past achievements does not receive support in this study. Tenured faculty members published more in the most recent two-year period and served on more committees than did faculty members on tenure track or those without tenure.

For the most part, the share of women and minority faculty members with tenure has increased. Even though minorities and women still lag the share of white males with tenure, the gap is closing. This improvement may represent the efforts to diversify the higher education workforce over the last decade.

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